

*The Case of Sodom and Gomorrah; and of the  
Israelites in the Wilderness, practically considered.*

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I N T W O  
**DISCOURSES,**

T H E O N E

Preached at *Crouched-Fryers* on the  
**PUBLICK FAST** appointed  
by Authority, *Jan. 9, 1739-40.*

T H E O T H E R

On a DAY OF PRAYER for a Blessing upon  
the **PUBLICK AFFAIRS**, *Octob. 4, 1739.*

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By *WILLIAM HARRIS, D. D.*

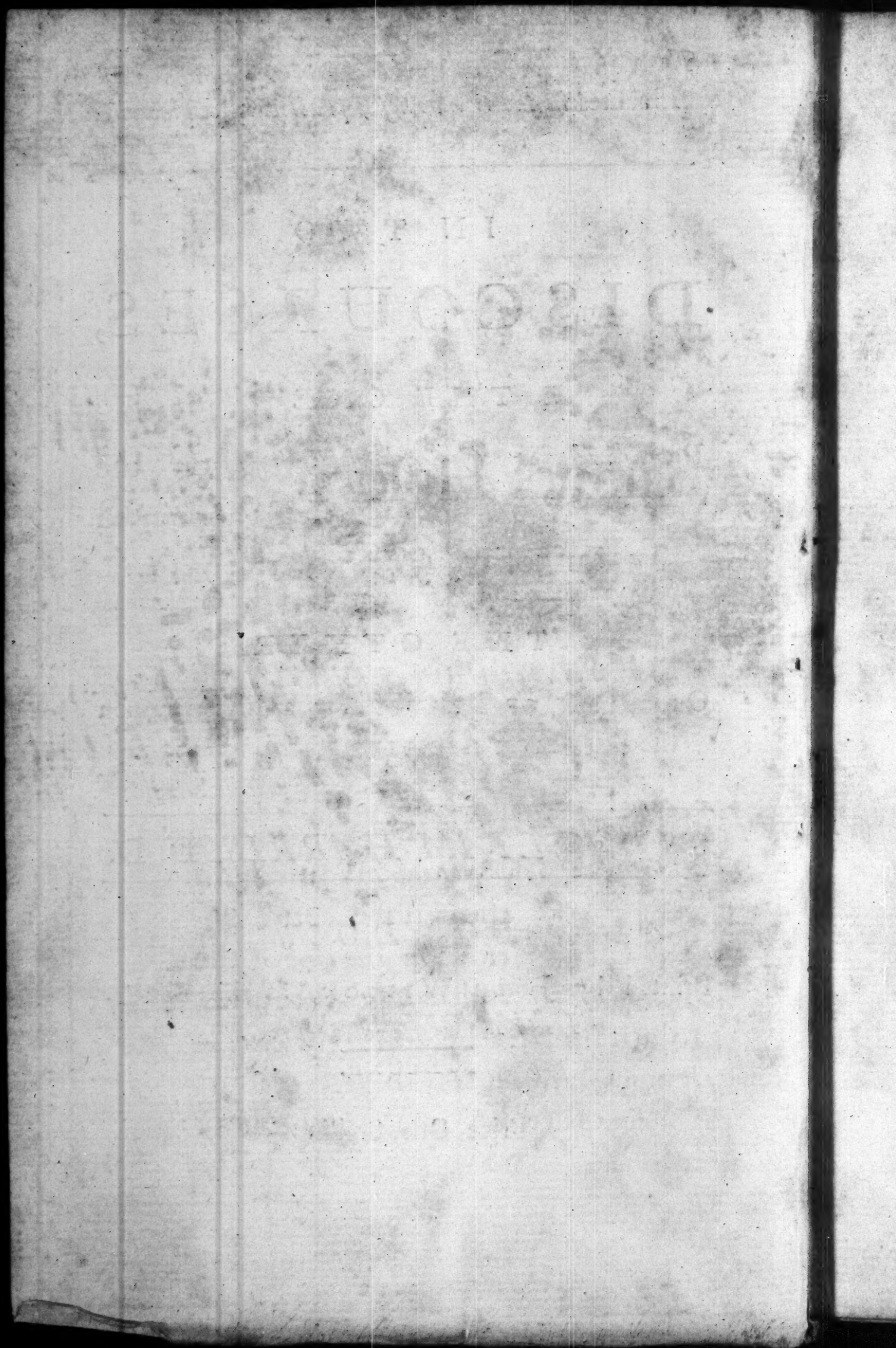
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L O N D O N,

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M D C C X L.

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T O  
Samuel Holden, *Esq*;  
O F  
*Roehampton, Surrey.*

S I R,



T would ill suit with  
the grave and se-  
rious *argument* of the  
following discourses,  
to attempt to blazon *real* excel-  
lencies, much less to give colours  
to *feigned* and imaginary ones ;  
a 2 the

the common topick of modern dedications. But you'll allow me to draw a short *sketch* of an happy life, of which others will make the *application*, while you only consider it as a *pattern* for imitation : And I believe it will be thought as far from ceremony and compliment, as nature and truth are from fiction and art ; and instruction, from flattery.

An high reverence of the *Deity* ; a great value for the christian *revelation* ; purity of *mind*, and integrity of *manners* ; a conscientious regard to the *will of God* in the conduct of life ; and a governing view to the *future state* ; an hearty love of common *liberty* ; and a disinterested zeal for the *publick good* ; a distinguished *wisdom*, and extensive *usefulness*, in private and publick life ; to wear well in the various

various turns of a long course of years; and be most esteemed by the *wisest men*, and by those who *know* one best; is the true excellency of the reasonable nature, and the greatest felicity of this world; and will give the noblest *satisfaction*, upon the strictest review, render us acceptable in the sight of our *Maker*, and justify our *hopes* of eternal life.

On the other hand; the empty gaieties of life, useless honours, and hoarded wealth, will only upbraid and torment, and leave us at last to the reproaches of our own minds, and the contempt of the world about us.

If these *discourses*, which are wholly owing to a sincere concern for the publick welfare, in the present juncture of our affairs, shall be found capable, in  
any



*Dedication.*

any measure, of serving the serious purposes to which they are directed ; I have reason to think they will not be unacceptable to you, but regarded as a small *testimony* of the great value, and particular friendship, of

*Your obliged,*

*humble servant,*

William Harris.



## DISCOURSE I.



GEN. XVIII. 32.

—*And he said, I will not destroy it for tens sake.*



THE words are the close of Disc. I. the remarkable *interview* between GOD and *Abraham* when he interceded for the preservation of *Sodom*. They had long lived in heinous and unnatural wickedness, and were now ripe for ruin. The particular circumstances of the case will be considered hereafter.

The sense of the words, as they stand related to the context, may be fitly comprised in two propositions : 1. That heinous wickedness naturally tends to bring destruction upon any place where it prevails. 2. That GOD sometimes spares wicked places for the sake of a few righteous

A

teous

Disc. I. teous which are among them ; I shall  
 consider them both, and apply them in  
 the close.

### PROPOSITION I.

*That heinous wickedness naturally tends  
 to the destruction of any place where  
 it prevails.*

I shall open and *illustrate* it in the in-  
 stance before us, and consider the account  
 which is here given of the *sin* of this  
 people, and of the *judgment* which it  
 brought upon them.

§ 1. I shall consider the account of  
 their *sin*, both in the general characters  
 which are given of it, and the particular  
 sins which are charged upon them.

1. As to the *general characters* of their  
 sin. We find their sin was *great* and cry-  
 ing ; 'tis said, the *men of Sodom were wick-*  
 ed, and *sinners before the Lord exceedingly* :  
 And, The *cry of Sodom and Gomorrah*  
*is great, and their sin very grievous.* They  
 were not ordinary offenders, and did not  
 sin at a common rate. They exceeded  
 all others in the commission of sin, and  
 were the vilest generation of men upon  
 the face of the earth ; the very sink and  
 dreggs of the creation. They were aban-  
 doned to the most heinous and horrid  
 wicked-

Chap. xiii.

13.

xiii. 20.



wickedness. The cry of their sin waxed great before the face of the Lord, and cried aloud for vengeance. Their sin was to such a degree as to become proverbial, and used to represent the worst sinners: *They are all of them to me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.* Disc. I. Gen. xix. 13. Deut. xxxii 32.

Besides, they were general and prevailing. They mingled promiscuously with one another, like people who have the plague, and catch the infection from one another. The air in which they breathed was poisoned and corrupted, and hardly any among them were sound and free. 'Tis expressed in general terms; the men of Sodom were wicked; it was their common character. So we find there were not ten righteous persons in all the five cities of the plain, when Abraham interceded with God for them; probably, none but Lot and his family.

And their wickedness was open and impudent. They did not artfully conceal their wickedness, or run into corners to commit it; but they did it in the face of the sun, as well as before the Lord; without any reverence of God, or fear and shame of man. This may be collected from the account here: *The men of the city compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, and said to Lot, Where are the men which*

Disc. I. *came in to thee this night, bring them out to us that we may know them?* They broke through all the restraints of natural modesty, and lost all sense of shame, which is commonly the last hold which is left upon the mind.

Philip. iii. 19. Jude 13. They gloried in their shame, and foamed out their own shame. Though their sins were like crimson, and of a scarlet dye, yet they knew not how to blush. As the prophet describes the state of the  
Jer. vi. 5. Jews; *Were they ashamed when they committed abomination; nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush. And,*  
Isa. iii. 9. *The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not. Not only their actions, but their looks discover it; they put a bold face upon the most shameless crimes.*

Finally, It was growing and incurable;  
Gen. xix. 13. *The cry of their sin waxed great. They grew worse and worse, and despised the means of their recovery; the conversation and warning of just Lot were treated with contempt, where he might expect to meet with greater regard; when he told them, that God would destroy this city, he seemed as one who mocked unto his sons-in-law. And the Apostle*  
Gen. xv. 14. *says, He was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous*  
2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. *man*

man dwelling among them, in seeing and bearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. There are two words used; the one signifies grief of heart, lamenting over their wickedness; the other, his using endeavours, and pleading with them, to reform them. Disc. I.

They were continually adding to the heap of their sins, and running deeper into fresh arrears of guilt; so that, at last, they grew to a monstrous bulk, and rose to a prodigious height. They were hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, and by long habits and customs in sin, grew passed all hopes of recovery and amendment. In short, they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and were quite ripe for ruin.

2. As to the particular sins charged upon them. And tho' they abounded in all manner of wickedness, yet there were some particular sins more remarkable among them, and more peculiar to themselves.

Thus, for example, they are taxed with rebellion. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, paid him tribute as a mark of subjection, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him. Whether he had any right by inheritance, or election, or conquest, does not appear. It seems they had acknowledged him as their sovereign, by

fo



Disc. I. so many years quiet submission ; and, probably, had sworn allegiance to him. Upon this account, I suppose, they are charged with rebellion, and throwing off the yoke of obedience, which they had obliged themselves to bear. *Rebellion*, properly so called, when 'tis against a lawful sovereign, and without a just and necessary cause, is a very high crime ; as 'tis breaking through solemn engagements, and violating the peace and good order of the world: It proceeds from perfidy, and a turbulent spirit, and introduces many calamities, and endless confusion.

Besides, there was monstrous *unclean-ness*. And though there is reason to believe they were guilty of every kind of it, for they gave themselves over to *fornication* ; yet there is one more infamous instance of it particularly mentioned, and referred to in other places, which seemed peculiar to themselves, and to have taken its rise from hence, as it still bears the name of the place. This is represented in those words, *Bring them out to us, that we may know them* : The horrid wickedness couched in that modest expression, may be gathered from *ver. 7, 8. I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly ; behold I have two daughters who have not known man*. So careful was he of the laws

Jul. 7.

Gen. xix.  
5.

laws of *hospitality*, that in the present Disc. I. confusion and transport of his mind, he had rather they should abuse his *daughters* than his *guests*. Perhaps the youthful and beautiful bodies in which the angels appeared, might provoke their lust, and give occasion to the attempt; as it made them mad with rage, and furiously assault *Lot*, ver. 9. See Numb. xxxi. 17.

This was an unnatural wickedness, threatned with death in the law of *Moses*; Levit ii. and twice mentioned by the Apostle, under the terms of *changing the natural use of the sex*; and *abusers of themselves with mankind*. And this is referred to in other places of scripture, and called, *committing abomination*; and the *filthy conversation of the wicked*; and *going after strange flesh*, or other flesh. Such was their monstrous impurity, not only below the dignity of *human nature*, but even of the *brutal nature* too. Rom. i. 17. I Cor. vi. 9. Ezek. xvi. 49. 2 Pet. ii. 7. Jude 7.

The prophet represents their case more particularly; *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness; neither did they strengthen the hands of the needy*. Pride is an odious crime in the sight of God and man; 'tis the rising and swelling of the mind upon the conceit of some supposed excellence or privilege, and oftentimes, where 'tis only supposed; and Ezek. xvi. 49.

Disc. I. and is as contrary to nature, and as great a deformity to the mind, as a *tumour* or swelling is to the body. They swelled with the vain imagination, and immeasurable opinion of themselves; and this disposed them to be restless and uneasy in their own minds, and troublesome to others, upon the slightest neglect. And the pride of their heart betrayed itself in insolent *behaviour*; for, Ezek. xvi. 'tis said, they were *haughty*. They carried it scornfully, and with contempt; 50. and looked down upon all about them as at a great distance, and with great disdain.

The *fulness of bread* must be understood to signify not only plenty, and abundance of provisions, which yet is fairly implied, and was a great instance of the bounty of providence; but the *abuse* of their plenty, their intemperance and excess in eating and drinking. Their Philip. iii. *belly was their God*, and they sacrificed 19. all the creatures of God to this impure idol. They only gratified their sensual appetite, and pampered the flesh; and the blessings of God which were designed for the refreshment of nature, were used to oppress it, and became a curse and a *snare* to them.

And there was abundance of *idleness*. Their plenty bred sloth, which is a reproachful



proachful vice, and unsuitable to our Disc. I.  
active natures. They unfitted them-  
selves for action by their luxury and ex-  
cess: They fed too high to be much  
disposed for labour. Their excess had  
enervated and dispirited them: They  
were clogged and oppressed with their  
own weight. They became a lazy and  
slothful generation of men, quite useless  
to the purposes of life; and were only  
insignificant *cyphers*, and lumber in the  
community. By this means too, they  
became an easy prey to every temptation,  
and at full leisure to be employed by the  
Devil.

And there was *uncharitableness* and  
oppression; they did not *strengthen the  
hands of the poor and needy*. This some  
refer to the inhospitable treatment of the  
strangers which sojourned with *Lot*,  
which was a great breach of all the laws  
of civil society, and common humanity.  
But I rather understand it of their un-  
mercifulness to the poor. They did not  
relieve the indigent, or pity those in di-  
stress. They had not the tenderness of  
human nature, or any *bowels of compas-  
sion* toward the poor: Their hearts were  
as iron, and their bowels as brass, unca-  
pable of relenting, or any kind impres-  
sions. They suffered the poor about  
them to want, and perish, and would  
B hardly

Disc. I. hardly part with the crumbs from their full tables, or give the least relief out of their abundant store.

Yea, 'tis well if they did not injure and oppress them by griping, and exacting with the utmost rigour, or downright injustice, and defrauding them of their right, when they were in their power; as the Apostle speaks of rich

Jam. v. 4. *men oppressing the poor, and keeping back the hire of the labourer with fraud.*

Our Lord takes notice of their world-  
 Lukexvii. *liness and security. Likewise also as it*  
 28. *was in the days of Lot, they eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, till the day that Lot went out of Sodom. They minded nothing but the world, and were wholly taken up in pursuing the business and pleasures of life, to the neglect of all care of their souls, or thoughts of God, and another world: They were men of this world, who have their portion in this life. They were immersed in worldly affairs, and utterly indisposed for the exercise of serious thoughts, or any regard to the warnings given them. They were in a constant hurry of business, and deep security, till their destruction came upon them. This is the true picture of their case, in all the distinguishing features of it.*

I shall

I shall only further observe, that among *Disc. I.* all these various instances of their sin, which are expressly mentioned, there does not appear any one instance of real goodness among any of them.

§ 2. I proceed to the account of the judgment which their sin brought upon them. This is represented in various lights. For example, as an unknown and extraordinary thing; 'tis spoken of as a thing unheard of, and an unparalled case, without any precedent or example; by an immediate vengeance from heaven, and which bore a resemblance, as well as a proportion to their uncommon wickedness: *Then the Lord rained upon Sodom Gen. xviii. and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the 28.*

*Lord out of Heaven; and the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.* It was sulphur mingled with fire †. He rained Hell out of Heaven, as one of the Ancients speaks. They burnt in unnatural lusts, and were consumed with a preternatural fire from Heaven; as *Nadab and Abihu* transgressed by offering *strange fire* before the Lord, which he commanded them not, and there went out *Levit. x. 1.* fire from the Lord, and devoured them.

B 2

The

† Tacitus says, Fulminum ictu arcisse, et igni celesti flagrasse. *Hist. l. v.* Mention is made of it by other Heathen authors: *Stabo, l. 16. Diodorus Siculus, l. 19. Plin. l. v. c. 16. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. iv. c. 26.*



Disc. I. The subject is too awful to admit the dryness of *criticism*, or I might observe, that when it is said, the *Lord rained from the Lord out of Heaven*, some have thought that it was by the ministry of a destroying angel, at the appointment of *Jehovah*, of which there are several instances in the Old Testament; others have thought it was by the *Messiah*, or the divine *Logos*; but, perhaps, it is only an *idiom* or form of speech, like that of GOD to *Moses*, the *Lord said to Moses*, *come up unto the Lord*, i. e. to himself.

Exod.  
xxiv. 3.

Besides, it was *sudden* and surprising, such as is threatned to secure and hardened sinners; *He who being often reprov'd, hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*. And they

Prov.  
xxviii. 1.

who *speak peace and safety*, reckon all is well, and no danger near, *sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape*.

1 Thes. v.  
3.

Immediately upon *Lot's* leaving the place, at the sun-rising the next day, the dreadful destruction came upon them. *The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar, then the Lord rained upon*

Gen. xix.  
22.

*Sodom*. The prophet speaks of the *punishment of the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown as in a moment, and no hand staid on her*. There was no notice given them, or any time to escape. So 'tis represented

Lam. iv.  
6.

presented by our Lord: *Likewise also as* Disc. I.  
*it was in the days of Lot, they did eat and*  
*drink—but the same day that Lot went* Luke xviii.  
*out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone* 28.  
*from Heaven, and destroyed them all.* Very  
 probably when they were all asleep, after  
 the revel and debauch of the last night,  
 or, perhaps, in the midst of their unna-  
 tural lust.

And it was a total and utter ruin;  
 called here an *overthrow*, like a building  
 thrown from its foundation: *And he over-* Gen. xix.  
*threw those cities, and all the plain, and*<sup>5</sup>  
*all the inhabitants of the city, and that*  
*which groweth upon the ground.* The  
 Evangelist says, *He destroyed them all.* And  
 the Apostle says, *He turned the cities of* 2 Pet. ii.  
*Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, con-* 26.  
*demning them with an overthrow.* This is  
 often referred to in Scripture, and made  
 the pattern of any great destruction  
 brought upon other places for their sin.  
 When Israel forsook the covenant of the  
 Lord God of their fathers, and went and  
 served other gods, 'tis threatned, *The whole* Deut.  
*land shall be brimstone and salt, and burn-* xxxix. 23.  
*ing, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor*  
*any grass grow therein, like the overthrow*  
*of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and*  
*Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his*  
*anger and in his wrath.* So God threat-  
 ned

Disc. I. ned *Babylon*, the glory of the kingdom, and  
 the beauty of Chaldee's excellency, that it  
 should be as *when God overthrew Sodom*  
 and Gomorrah : *It shall never be inhabit-*  
*ed, neither shall it be dwelt in from gene-*  
*ration to generation.* And again, *Moab*  
*shall be as Sodom, and the children of Am-*  
*mon as Gomorrah, a perpetual desolation.*  
 They were entirely consumed and burnt  
 to ashes, and all that pleasant and plen-  
 tiful country, which was well watered  
 every where as the garden of the Lord, is  
 turned into a dead and noisome lake : No  
 creature can live it, and the baleful  
 steams blast every thing which grows  
 about it.

Finally, 'tis represented as an *exemplary*  
 punishment, and a standing pattern of  
 righteous vengeance to all other nations,  
 and the most remarkable instance in its  
 kind. So the Apostle speaks of it ; *Mak-*  
*ing them an example to those who should*  
*after live ungodly.* 'Tis an example of  
 the greatest destruction which God brings  
 upon a wicked people, and a lively em-  
 blem of the everlasting destruction of  
 the wicked in hell. *I have overthrown*  
*some of you as God overthrew Sodom and*  
*Gomorrah.* And the Apostle says, *Even*  
*as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities*  
*about them—are set forth as examples suf-*  
*fering*

Isai. xiii.  
19.

Zeph. ii.  
9.

Gen. xiii.  
10.

2 Pet. ii.  
6.

Amos iv.  
11.

Jude 7.



fering the vengeance of eternal fire\*. They Disc. I. are an example and warning to all other places to the end of the world. I proceed to

## PROPOSITION II.

*That God sometimes spares very wicked places for the sake of a few righteous which are among them.*

Here I shall 1. *Illustrate* the truth of it.  
2. *Account* for the reason of it, and justify the divine conduct in it.

§ 1. To *illustrate* the truth of it by proper instances recorded in the Scripture, and particularly by the instance of the text. Thus God dealt with the *old World*, when he spared it several ages for the sake of the righteous who were in it, and did not destroy it at last till they were universally degenerate, and all *flesh had corrupted his way*; insomuch that one would be ready to think, from the Scripture account, that *Noah* and his family Gen. vi. were the only righteous persons left upon the

\* *Eternal fire*, which was to continue for many ages, and to represent the *fire which cannot be quenched*. So *Pliny* says, *Flagrare in Phaselide montem chimæram*, l. xi. c. immortali, diebus et noctibus, flammâ. The whole history seems to be referred to by many circumstances in the story of *Philemon* and *Baucis* in *Ovid. Metam.* l. viii. Vid. *Dissert. Clerici de Sodomæ subversione*.

Disc. I. the earth. When GOD brought many terrible plagues and judgments upon *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* for their oppression of the *Israelites*, any one of which would have destroyed the nation, why, for the sake of his people, and at the entreaty of *Moses*, he was prevailed with, from time to time, to remove the judgment from them; and did not destroy *Pharaoh* and his host, till he *hardened his heart*, and became incurably obstinate, and had no longer *Moses* to intercede, nor any of the people of *Israel* among them.

Gen. viii.  
15.

Exod.  
xxxii. 2.

—xxxii.

9.  
Numb.

xv. 7.

—xvi. 20.

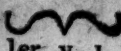
1 Sam.

vii. 9.

Job xlii.

8, 9.

When the *Israelites* themselves provoked the anger of the Lord by their disobedience and rebellion in the wilderness, a plague broke forth upon them, which would have utterly consumed them, if *Moses* had not stood in the breach, and turned away the anger of GOD: *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach.* So when they provoked GOD by making the *golden calf*. At another time, *Phineas* executed judgment, and the plague was staid. And when they despised the promised land, *Samuel* prevailed for their deliverance out of the hands of the *Philistines*. And GOD accepted *Job's* intercession for his three friends. 'Tis a remarkable instance to

to this purpose in the prophet : *Run to* Disc. I.  
*and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,*   
*and see now, and know, and seek in the* Jer. v. 1.  
*broad places thereof, where there is the*  
*greatest resort of people, if you can find*  
*a man, if there be any who executeth judg-*  
*ment, and seeketh truth, and I will pardon*  
*it.* He would save Jerusalem at that  
time for one man; and it was not utter-  
ly destroyed at last, after a long course  
of formality, and hypocrisy, and wick-  
edness, till they had not only killed the  
prophets, and stoned them who were sent  
unto them, but crucified the Lord of life,  
and filled up the measure of their iniquity,  
and became incurably blind and hard-  
ened.

GOD sometimes delays the execution  
of a threatened judgment, or removes a  
judgment inflicted, or abates and shortens  
it, and don't utterly destroy a wicked  
people, till there are no righteous left  
among them, or they are *taken away from*  
*the evil to come.* So Sodom was not de-  
stroyed, till Lot was removed out of it.  
*Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do* Gen. xix.  
*any thing till thou art come thither.* And 22.  
our Lord says, that *for the elect sake,* the Matt.  
*days of tribulation,* which were to come xxiv.  
upon the earth, *should be shortened.* 'Tis  
for the sake of the *wheat* that the *tares* — xiii.  
are suffered to grow in the field of the 29.



Disc. I. church to *the end of the world*. From hence we justly conclude, that all the cities and nations of the earth are preserved from destruction, for the sake of the righteous men which are among them.

But the greatest instance of all, is that of the *text*; and we may conceive of it in this order. GOD first comes down to *enquire* into the matter. So 'tis represented; *And the Lord said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto me; and if not, I will know it.* This is spoken after the manner of men, and in the language of a *judge*; who first examines into the truth of the facts, and merits of a cause, before he passes sentence; and is designed to shew the wisdom and impartiality of the divine proceedings.

Gen. xviii.  
20.

In the next place, he *acquaints Abraham* with it, who was the *friend of God*, and had the greatest interest in him; and gives him an opportunity of pleading with him, and offering what he could in their favour. *And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do—— for I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, that they*

*they shall keep the way of the Lord.* This Disc. I. plainly discovered a willingness to spare them, and that he was not absolutely determined upon an immediate destruction, without any farther consideration whatsoever. And tho' they were wicked and unworthy, and deserved no pity or regard on their account, yet he would spare them upon the account of others; and if any thing could be proposed to render it worthy of GOD, and consistent with his perfections and government.

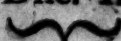
And then there is *Abraham's plea* with GOD, or the argument he uses, and which GOD allows. *And Abraham drew near, and said,* that is, to the divine glory, the symbol of his presence, or to the angel which remained with him, *Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked; that be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* Can it stand with the rectitude of thy nature, and the justice of thy government, to involve the righteous and the wicked in one common ruin, and make no difference between them and the other. This plea is allowed.

And then follows GOD's merciful *concessions* to *Abraham* upon this ground. He

Disc. I. proposes his own number, and what he thought reasonable and sufficient: *Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for fifty righteous which are therein?* A small number for five whole cities. This was readily granted. *The Lord said, if I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the place for their sake.* When Abraham had begun, he was not willing to give over at the first proposal; and therefore, in the next place he proposes, with high reverence of GOD, and humble diffidence of himself; *Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes; peradventure there shall lack five of fifty righteous, wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?* This was putting it in the most favourable manner, and to the greatest advantage. And this was granted too: *And he said, if I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it.* Being deeply sensible of the misery of the case, he advances a step farther: *Peradventure there shall be forty found there; --- And he said, I will not do it for forty sake.*

Having gone thus far, he was loth to give it up, but deprecates the divine displeasure, and ventures to make another offer: *And he said, O let not the Lord be*



be angry, and I will speak; Peradventure Disc. I.  
 there are thirty shall be found there: And   
 that was accepted; I will not do it, if I <sup>Gen. xviii.</sup>  
 find thirty there. Afterwards he comes <sub>30.</sub>

to twenty; and at last brings it down to  
 ten. O let not the Lord be angry, and I — ver. 32.

will speak but this once: He speaks as if  
 he were afraid of tiring out the divine  
 patience, and provoking his anger against  
 himself, while he was suing for mercy  
 to others; Peradventure ten shall be found  
 there: And, O amazing goodness! He  
 said, I will not destroy it for tens sake.

This was the most surprizing instance of  
 condescending goodness, beyond all ex-  
 ample and imagination.

'Tis very observable here, that *Abra-  
 ham* left off first: He gave over asking, be-  
 fore God gave over granting. The divine  
 goodness was greater than *Abraham's faith*.  
 Perhaps he might have gone lower yet,  
 and have saved the five cities, if there  
 had been one righteous man in each.

§ 2. I am to *account* for it, and ju-  
 stify the divine conduct. We have seen  
 the truth of the fact, let us now con-  
 sider a little the reason of it. One would  
 be ready to think, that every one should  
 stand upon his own bottom, and fare ac-  
 cording to his respective estate; that the  
 righteous should be saved in his righ-  
 teousness, and the wicked perish in his  
 wicked-

Disc. I. wickedness. How then is it that God will spare the wicked for the sake of the righteous? I answer, that this must be understood only of present and *temporal* judgments, not of the final punishments of the *future state*, which are of a different consideration; and of this some account may be given in the following particulars.

1. 'Tis to give a greater display of the divine *mercy*. 'Tis an illustrious instance of goodness, to spare the unrighteous for the sake of the *righteous*; to save those who have deserved to be punished, and whose sins cry aloud for speedy vengeance; who have no righteousness of their own to recommend them to his favour, or move his compassion toward them. And to save *many* sinners for the sake of a *few* righteous, five whole cities for the sake of ten righteous persons, two for each city. God sometimes spares a whole city, or country, for the sake of a few righteous which are scattered up and down among them; a great number of sinners, for a small handful of righteous men, who have an interest in God, and plead for their preservation.

How wonderful an instance is this of goodness? What propensity to mercy does it shew? How amiable does it render the divine Being; how worthy our love

love and fear? Well may we say, *How Disc. I.*  
*great is his goodness; and O the riches of*  
*his mercy!* How much beyond all ex-  
ample; how worthy of GOD, and un-  
like the mercy of creatures to one an-  
other?

2. To shew his *value* of real right-  
eousness, and the regard he has to the  
*prayers* of righteous men. Real right-  
eousness is the image of GOD upon the  
soul of man, and a conformity to his  
holy nature: We are *holy as he is holy*.  
'Tis the most amiable and excellent thing,  
in the sight of GOD, in this lower world,  
as 'tis the nearest resemblance of him-  
self: *The righteous Lord loveth righteous-*  
*ness, and his countenance doth behold the*  
*upright*. He looks upon them with plea-  
sure, and loves the reflection of his own  
image upon them. So his people are re-  
presented as his *treasure*, his *jewels*, and  
the *apple of his eye*, to signify his high  
value and tenderness towards them.

And no wonder then they have a great  
interest in him, as well as a great con-  
cern for the good of others. They plead  
with GOD with acceptance, and he is  
pleased with their importunity: *The*  
*prayer of the upright is his delight*; and  
whatsoever they ask in the *name of Christ*,  
and *according to his will*, he *heareth* them.  
They have *power with God*, and *pre-*  
*vail*;



Disc. I. *vail*; and the *fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. Righteous

Jam. v.  
16.

men have a great concern for the good of the world, and are deeply affected with the miseries of the wicked; and they *wrestle with God* for their deliverance and preservation. Now for the sake of the righteous he does not destroy the wicked. 'Tis not because he is not angry with the wicked, for *God is angry with the wicked every day*, but because he loves the righteous. He will rather bear with the wicked, who are his enemies, than suffer his friends and favourites to be hurt; and the cry of their prayers is more prevalent, than that of the others sins.

3. There are wise ends of government and *providence* answered by it. The righteous and wicked mingle together in this world: The *tares* grow with the *wheat*; and they are suffered to do so, for this reason, *lest they gather the wheat with the tares*; but the righteous and wicked will be separated hereafter, *when the time of harvest is come*; and then the *wheat will be gathered into the barn*, and the *tares will be cast into unquenchable fire*.

Matth.  
xiii. 30.

But in this world it is otherwise. Judgments cannot come upon any place, without falling upon one as well as the other. The friends and enemies of God must share

share a common fate, and be made equal Disc. I.  
to one another. God forbears to punish  
the wicked, because they are mingled  
with the righteous; and the one cannot  
be punished, but the other must suffer  
too. And this consideration *Abraham*  
urges with God here, *ver. 23 and 25.*

Besides that God often, by this means,  
trys the wicked afresh, and gives them a  
*space of repentance.* He is willing to see  
whether any of them may be reclaimed  
by the example and influence of righ-  
teous men, as the example and conversa-  
tion of *Lot in Sodom.* Perhaps the *good-  
ness of God* may lead some of them to  
*repentance*; and they may be recover-  
ed by further means, and longer exercise  
of patience, who have been irreclaimable  
hitherto. Perhaps there are some of them  
to be gathered in, and he waits the sea-  
son of their recovery, and that he may  
be *gracious to them.* The *Lord knoweth*  
them *who are his*, at the greatest distance,  
and in the worst circumstances; and pre-  
sent judgments, and destruction, might  
prevent some designs of his mercy, and  
lose the glory of their recovery.

4. To render the finally impenitent ut-  
terly *inexcusable*, and to justify the great-  
est severity at last. If after all the exer-  
cise of mercy and patience towards them,  
and the long delay of deserved judg-  
ments;

D

Disc. I. ments ; if after all his willingness to spare them, and to be prevailed with by the righteous among them, they still remain secure and obstinate ; how clear will be their condemnation, how just their punishment and destruction ? Were not *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* justly destroyed, when they continued impenitent after the long exercise of divine goodness toward them, the conversation of *Lot* among them, and the intercession of *Abraham* on their behalf ? Who was to blame, and where must the fault be laid ? Is *there unrighteousness with God* ? Is *God unfaithful* ? Will not every guilty *mouth be stopped*, and he be *clear when he judgeth*, and *justified when he speaketh* ?

And so it will be in the case of other sinners. It will render the divine procedure unexceptionable, and vindicate the divine severity, in the greatest judgments of God upon wicked places, and in the final punishment of the wicked.

If it be said here, Does not God sometimes punish wicked places, where there are some righteous among them ; and do not righteous men sometimes perish in a common calamity ; and are all ruined in the other world, who fall by publick judgments in this ? I shall only briefly suggest the following *hints*. God long waits before he destroys any people,  
for



for the sake of the righteous. 'Tis usually Disc. I.  
 a considerable time before he comes to a  
 resolution to destroy them, how wicked  
 soever they are : Their righteousness sig-  
 nifies thus much at least, and, I believe,  
 always, and without exception : It pre-  
 vails to delay and defer the judgments of  
 GOD, where it does not wholly prevent  
 them. I doubt not but *Sodom* would  
 have been destroyed sooner, if *Lot* had  
 not been in it. And he often removes  
 righteous men from approaching judg-  
 ments, and *takes them away from the evil*  
*to come.* They are safe in harbour be-  
 fore the storm arises. 'Tis often very  
 ominous, and a presage of judgment,  
 when GOD is gathering righteous men  
 out of the world, especially eminently  
 good and useful men ; as *Lot* was called  
 out of *Sodom* just before the destruction  
 came upon them. However, their *souls*  
 will be saved in the day of the Lord,  
 when they lose their lives in a common  
 distress : They will *deliver their own souls*,  
 when they cannot prevail for the saving  
 of those about them. The case of the  
 text relates to *extraordinary* judgments,  
 inflicted immediately by GOD himself,  
 not to the course of *ordinary* providence,  
 and natural causes, which necessarily have  
 their effect, without a divine interposure  
 to prevent. After all, there is a *sovereign*

Disc. I. *reignty* in the divine mercy; and the righteous God, who never deals unjustly with the wickedest men, may dispense his mercy in what seasons, and what manner, and what degrees he thinks fit, and his unsearchable wisdom shall direct.

I shall conclude with some *practical Reflections* upon what has been said.

1. Let this lead us to a serious *review* of our own sin. I trust our sin is neither so great, or so general, as was that of *Sodom*; and that we have many righteous men in this city, and in every part of the nation, among all the several denominations of christians among us, more than in all the five cities of the plain; yet I doubt there is reason to fear, that there is no instance of *Sodom's* sin, but is to be found among some or other of us, even the vilest and grossest instance not excepted. We exceed them in privilege and advantage, and, like *Capernaum*, are *lifted up to Heaven*; such, as if they had enjoyed, they might have *repented* and *continued to this day*: But we resemble them in their sin, and have some sins of high aggravation, peculiar to ourselves, and, in this respect, are greater sinners than they; as the prophet says of *Jerusalem, Sodom, thy sister, has not done as thou hast done*. And our Lord says, upon this account, it will be  
more

Matt. xi.

23.

Ezek. xvi.

48.

more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah Disc. I.  
in the day of judgment, than for such. ~~~~~

Thus the *profaning* the sacred name of God by impious oaths, and more than *bellish* imprecations upon themselves, and others, which are every where to be met with, especially among the lower orders of men, without any check or restraint, tho' in defiance of all the laws of God and man, and to the grievous offence of every pious soul: *Because of swearing the land mourneth.* The growing *infidelity* Jer. xxiii. 10. of the present age, and contempt of divine revelations, and divine appointments. The *formality* and indifference, without the life and power of religion, among many of the professors of it. The *pride*, and luxury, and extravagance of life, beyond mens figure and fortune in the world, so very prevailing; the intemperance and *excess*; the *impurities* of every kind; the *uncharitableness* and oppression; the *prejudices* and animosity among ourselves, and to the government under which we are protected, which is to be found among many, make a great cry for judgments from heaven, and loudly call for deep humiliation, and earnest supplications to God, this day, for the preservation and prosperity of the nation.

2. Righteous men are the *stability* and security of the places where they live.  
They



Disc. I. They are the bulwarks and best defence  
 of any people from the judgments of  
 GOD, and the power of their enemies. So  
 Job xxii. *Elihu says, He shall deliver the island of*  
 30. *the innocent, and it shall be delivered by*  
*the pureness of his hands,* how much so-  
 ever that is derided and despised. The  
 Wiseman says, *Righteousness exalteth a*  
*nation, but sin is the reproach of any people.*  
 The throne is established in righteousness,  
 and the welfare and prosperity of the  
 people depend upon it. Righteous men  
 are the true glory and security of the  
 places to which they belong. GOD spares  
 a wicked city, or kingdom, for the sake  
 of the righteous who are among them;  
 and they are of more consequence to their  
 safety and welfare, than all the inhabi-  
 tants beside. One righteous *Lot*, and his  
 family, in *Sodom*, prevailed for the de-  
 laying judgments and destruction; and  
 ten righteous persons would have prevail-  
 ed for the saving of it.

Every righteous man is a treasure to  
 the place where he lives, and contributes  
 to the continuance of blessings, and keep-  
 ing off judgments from coming down  
 upon it; and a considerable number of  
 righteous men, is the best security, and  
 means of establishment. They are the  
*pillars of the earth*, who uphold the world  
 in being; and if there were no righteous  
 men

men left in it, the world would be presently destroyed. Of what consequence and importance is real righteousness; of what value and excellence are righteous persons? How truly may we say, *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, and the saints are the excellent of the earth. Disc. I.  
Prov. xii. 28.  
Psal. xvi. 3.

3. The unreasonable conduct of wicked men in *injuring* and persecuting the righteous. They are the security of the places where they are, and they owe their safety to them. The *enmity* between the seed of the woman and the serpent's seed, is as old as the fall of man, and began with Cain's hatred of his brother Abel, because he was more *righteous* than he; 1 John iii. 12. but it has been continued through every age to this day: So the Apostle says; *But as then he who was born after the flesh persecuted him who was born after the spirit, even so it is now.* Gal. iv. 19.

But what unaccountable folly is this? Does not their rage blind their minds? For 'tis they who keep off the judgments of God from them; and by their hatred and violence to the righteous, they cut the ground upon which they stand from under them, and destroy their own security. They undermine the foundation on which the building entirely rests, and, like *Sampson*, blind and enraged, pull down

Disc. I. down the pillars of the house, and involve themselves in a common ruin. As if when a city is besieged by a powerful enemy, the inhabitants should demolish the fortifications, and open a breach for the enemy to enter. They break down their own defence, and open a way for the judgments of God upon themselves. They certainly act like men void of reason and consideration, who use them ill to whom they are most obliged, and upon whom their common safety depends.

4. Let righteous men use their best interest with God, and *intercede* with him for the places in which they live. The cry of our sin is great every where; many of the sins of *Sodom* prevail in most places, and cry for judgments from heaven: Let the righteous who are among them plead with God as *Abraham* did, for the places where they dwell, and send up a *counter* cry to the cry of our sins. Use your interest with God this day, now the whole nation is upon the knee before God, that abounding wickedness may not bring down deserved judgments, and that the anger of God may be restrained, and that we may be preserved from the power and designs of our enemies, and prospered in our just and honourable undertakings.

Let



Let all the righteous in every part of Disc. I.  
the nation join with one heart in saying, *Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up for ever.* 9. *Psal. xxix.*

And the force of so many united prayers would come with holy violence to heaven, and promise success to all our affairs. And 'tis a dreadful case with any people, and a certain presage of approaching ruin, when God is so far provoked as to say, *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people.* Jer. xv. 1.

And, *Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord.* Ezek. xiv. 14.

To conclude, What encouragement is this to become *righteous*? Let us *cease to do evil, and learn to do well*: Let the *wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord*, that he may obtain mercy from God to himself, which is the first and greatest consideration, and may become a publick blessing to the world. Let every man be induced to become righteous, not only for the sake of his own soul, but of love to his country, and zeal for the publick good. By this means he will become a blessing to the place where he lives, and contribute to the keeping off the judgments of God,

E

and

Disc. I. and continuing his blessing upon us ; when  
wicked men are a plague and curse of  
the places where they are, who break  
down their defence, and bring down the  
judgments of God upon them. Let every  
one be ambitious to contribute to the  
common safety, as we have all contri-  
buted to the common stock of national  
sin. In this way, every one may do his  
part ; and the meanest person, who truly  
fears God, may be of more consequence  
to the publick than his greatest wicked  
neighbour, and become a blessing to the  
whole nation.





## DISCOURSE II.



I COR. X. II.

*Now all these things happened to them for examples ; and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*



THE Apostle in the beginning of this chapter, proposes the example of the *Israelites* to the christian church, for their warning and caution, to dissuade them from their sins, which brought the judgments of God upon them. *These things were our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted ; that we should take warning by their example. And here in the text : All these things happened,*

Disc. II.

I Cor. x.



Disc. II. *ed*, or beset them, *for examples*. The word, in both places, is τύποι, types or figures of things to come in like cases.

— *And are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*; for our instruction and warning, to avoid their sins, and escape their punishment, who live under the christian dispensation, or in the last ages of the world. And great use may be made of them, where they are rightly considered and improved.

In order to this purpose, I shall propose, 1. To *represent* the case of the *Jews*, and state the fact. 2. Consider the force of the example, and shew what *instruction* it is proper to give us, and what influence it ought to have upon us, to dissuade us from their sins.

#### SECTION I.

1. I shall *represent* the case, and state the fact. And to set this example before you to greater advantage, it will be necessary to consider the *sin* with which they are here charged; and the *punishment* which was inflicted upon them, upon that account.

§ 1. The *sins* which are here charged upon them.—I shall briefly settle the sense

sense of each, and illustrate it by the hi- Disc. II.  
story to which it refers. Thus for ex-  
ample. He speaks of their *lusting after* 1 Cor. x.  
*evil things*. They lusted after flesh, when <sup>6.</sup>  
they had *manna* sufficient provided for  
them. So we find, *The mixed multitude* Numb. xi.  
*which was among them fell a lusting, and* <sup>4.</sup>  
*the children of Israel wept again, and said,*  
*Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remem-*  
*ber the fish we did eat in Egypt freely,*  
*but now our soul is dried away; there is*  
*nothing at all besides this manna before our*  
*eyes.* So the Psalmist says, *They lusted ex-* Psal. cvi.  
*ceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted* <sup>14.</sup>  
*God in the desert:* They were not satis-  
fied with *manna*, but called it *light bread*,  
tho' it was *bread from heaven*, and is call-  
ed, upon that account, *angels food*. They  
wanted *flesh* as well as *manna*; and even  
that did not satisfy their unruly appetite;  
*When he gave them manna and quails from* Psalm  
*heaven, flesh to their bread, they were not* xcvi. 8.  
*estranged from their lusts.*

And then there was *idolatry*. *Neither*  
*be ye idolaters, as were some of them.* This,  
probably, refers to the case of the *golden*  
*calf*. 'Tis said in the history; *They have* Exod.  
*made them a molten calf, and have wor-* xxxii. 8.  
*shipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto;*  
*and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which*  
*brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* The  
Psalmist

Disc. II. Psalmist refers to this, when he says,  
 ~~~~~ *They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped a molten image*; where God had just before given his law, and expressly forbidden idolatry in the beginning of it; *thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox which eateth grass.* This was a strange instance of stupidity and ingratitude, after such amazing appearances of power and mercy in their favour.

We have another instance of *this* kind, when the people began to commit *whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and they called the people to the sacrifice of their gods*; and the people did eat, and bow down to their gods: *And Israel joined himself to Baal-peor, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.* This is taken notice of by the Psalmist; *They joined themselves also to Baal-peor, and eat the sacrifices of the dead. They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. They served their idols, which were a snare to them*; yea, they sacrificed their sons and daughters to devils, and sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. According to the barbarous rites of the country, they sacrificed to *demons*, and infernal spirits, not only their beasts, but their children, upon the altars of the idols of Canaan.

Numb.

xxv. 1, 2.

Psal. cvi.  
18.

— 35.



naan \*. He refers to this in another Disc. II. place; *They provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.* This was contrary to natural light and reason, as well as the express law of God at Horeb; and a breach of the fundamental agreement between God and this people, and the design of their peculiarity.

Besides, there was fornication: *Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed.* This attended the sacrifices of *Baal-peor*, and was a usual practice in the Heathen idolatry. Of this we read in the history: *They vexed you in their wives wherewith they had beguiled you in the matter of Baal-peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, daughter of the prince of Midian, their sister, who was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.* And this

Pfalm  
xcviii. 58.

1 Cor. x.

Numb.  
xxv. 18.

\* *Baal* signifies *Lord*, or *Master*, and was the ancient god of the heathen *Canaanites*, whom the *Israelites* were drawn to worship by the arts of the *Moabites*. *Peor* was an high mountain in the land of *Moab*, upon which the temple of *Baal* stood: And he was called *Baal-peor*, as *Jupiter* was called *Olympius*, upon the same account.

Some have thought *Baal-peor* was the same with *Adonis*, or *Orus*, who was worshipped among the *Egyptians*, and eastern nations, *Calm. Dict. de Sanct. Bibl. Maimonides*, and the *Rabbins*, make him the same with *Priapus*: But the learned *Selden* thinks it was *Pluto*, and that the *Psalmist* refers to him cvi. 28. *They joined themselves to Baal-peor, and eat the sacrifices of the dead*: The sacrifices which were offered to appease the manes of the dead. Vid. *De Diis Syris*.

Disc. II. this is intimated here, in the latter part of ver. 7. *The people sat down to eat and drink, at their idol's feast, and rose up to play, or to dance, as they did round about the golden calf, and at their idol worship.*

Numb.  
xxv. 10.

Again they tempted the Lord : *Neither let us tempt Christ as they also tempted.* The most natural construction seems to be, as they tempted Christ, who was the angel who led them in the wilderness, and had the direction and conduct of them all along, and whom they were cautioned not to offend, and required to hearken to :

Exod.  
xxiii. 20.

*Behold I send my angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee to the place which I have prepared: Beware of him, obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him: i. e. his authority, as he was appointed by him, and his vicegerent; and, probably, was present with them at the giving of the law, and is referred to by St. Stephen, when he says, This is he who was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel who spake to him in mount Sinai; and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us.*

Acts vii.  
38.

Heb. v.  
26.

*And in this reference Moses is said to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. And so the Apostle's argument stands in full force, and*

and appears to great advantage : And so Disc. II.  
the ancient *Christian Writers* pretty generally understood it. ~~~~~

And they *tempted* the Lord, or made an undue proof and trial of him by their unbelieving distrust, and rash presumption, notwithstanding all the wonders of his power and mercy. They did not trust him for what he had promised, and gave them reason to expect from him ; and they expected from him what he had never promised, or given them any reason to expect ; which is the proper extent of tempting him. We have an instance of both these kinds in the Psalmist ; *For all this they sinned still, and believed not his wonderful works.* And again ; *They tempted GOD in their hearts, and asked meat for their lusts :* Not for their hunger, but to gratify their sensual appetites, and wanton desires ; and without any leave and warrant from him. Psalm xcvi. 30.

Finally, their *murmuring* is particularly : Cor. x. charged upon them : *Neither murmur ye* 9. *as some of them also murmured.* This was remarkable and notorious ; for 'tis said, *That all the children of Israel murmured* Numb. xiv. 7. *against Moses, and against Aaron : And the whole congregation said to him, Would GOD we had died in the land of Egypt ; or would GOD we had died in the wilderness. Wherefore have ye brought us to this*  
F land,



Disc. II. *land, to fall by the sword? Were it not better for us to return to Egypt? And they said one to another, let us make a captain, and return to Egypt. And when Joshua, and Caleb remonstrated against their rashness and folly, they grew outrageous, and the whole congregation had stone them with stones. So in another place, The people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness, for there is no bread, neither water, and our soul loatheth this light bread. 'Tis observed by the Psalmist, They murmured in their tents, and hearkened not to the voice of the Lord.*

Numb.  
xiv. 10.

Numb.  
xxi. 5.

Psal. cvi.  
25.

It was a great aggravation of their sin, that it was so general and prevailing; for all the people, and the whole congregation murmured against God, and against Moses and Aaron, and Joshua and Caleb, the great instruments of his providence, and of their preservation. And this was repeated upon every fresh difficulty which arose, and continued for a long time together. This is implied in those expressions, *How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be ere they believe me for all the signs which I have shewn among them? And they tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice.* And this is particularly taken notice

Numb.  
xiv. 11.

— 22.

notice of by the Psalmist, *How often did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert. Many a time did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their councils. And forty years long was I grieved with this generation; during the whole time of their passage through the wilderness; as if their conduct had been one continued provocation.*

Disc. II.

Psalm  
xcviii. 40.

—xcv. 10.

I shall only observe further under this head, That these several sins which the Apostle here cautions the *Corinthians* against, were such as they were either guilty of themselves, or were in danger of being corrupted with by others. So they *lusted* to eat things sacrificed to idols at their feasts, when they had plenty of food at home, and made themselves *partakers of the table of devils*, or demons; and some of them eat and drunk to excess at the *Lord's-table*. The heathen *Corinthians* were infamous for uncleanness; and we read of an *incestuous person* among the Christians. And there were murmurings and envyings of one another on account of their *spiritual gifts*, and the fear of suffering, and *persecution*.

§ 2. The *punishment* which befel them for their sins. This is particularly represented by the Apostle, in various instances. 'Tis said more generally, *With many of them GOD was not well pleased;*

1 Cor. x.

5.

Disc. II. that is, by a usual *miosis*, frequent in the Scripture, he was highly offended at their aggravated sin. And this appeared by the effects ; for it was the root of all the evil which befel them. *They were overthrown in the wilderness ; i. e. that whole generation of men died in the wilderness, as their sin of one kind or another was very general among them.* So we find, when they numbered the children of *Israel* in the wilderness of *Sinai*, 'tis said, *Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them who provoked me see it. And their carcases shall fall in the wilderness ; in the wilderness they shall be consumed, and shall die.* And accordingly we find it proved : *For the Lord had said to them, surely ye shall die in the wilderness, and there was not left one of them ;* that is, who had been numbered in the general muster of the people at *Sinai*, save *Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.* None of them came to the promised land, but these two who only had kept their integrity, and were not involved in the common guilt. So he *swear in his wrath they should not enter into his rest.*

How this was brought about, we have an account in the following verses. It was not by mere *decay* of nature, or infirmities of age, that that whole generation



ration of men died in forty years ; but Disc. II.  
by the *judgments* of God inflicted upon them for their provoking guilt. So there *fell in the wilderness three and twenty thousand* ; that is, by the plague which was sent among them for their idolatry and fornication in the matter of *Baal-peor*. So he had threatned them : *I will smite them with the pestilence, and dismember them.* And 'tis said, *That those who died of the plague were four and twenty thousand.* The Apostle says *three and twenty thousand*, because a thousand of them died by the hands of civil justice. And Moses said to the judges of Israel, *slay every one of you his man who were joined to Baal-peor.*

1 Cor. x.

8.

Numb.

xiv. 12.

—xxv. 9.

—xxv. 5.

Again, *They were destroyed of serpents.* Of this we have the following account ; *The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and bit the people, and much people of Israel died.* They enflamed their blood with a venomous heat, and tormented them with an unnatural thirst, which proved mortal to great numbers ; till the *brazen serpent* was appointed to be set up for their relief, which was a type and image of the *Messiah* hanging upon the cross, as appears by the allusion to it, *John iii. 14. As the serpent was lifted up, &c.*

Numb.

xxi. 6.

'Tis

Disc. II.

'Tis added, They were *destroyed of the destroyer*, that is, by the hands of the destroying angel, who brought the plague upon them. Thus God contended with them for their sins, and left a standing example to all after-ages of righteous judgment for provoking guilt upon his own people. But this leads us to consider

## SECTION II.

II. The *force* of the example; or what instruction it is proper to give us, and what influence it ought to have upon us, that is, to dissuade us from like sins. For so the Apostle speaks; *Now these things were written for our example, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things.* And in the text, *These things happened to them for examples, and are written for our admonition.* And he closes the whole paragraph with this solemn caution, *Wherefore let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.* But where lies the force of the example, and what *admonition* is it proper to give? I shall represent it distinctly in the following particulars.

1 Cor. x.  
6,

ver. 12.

1. Examples are more sensible and *affecting*, than mere instructions and commands. This is the advantage of examples of any kind, whether good or bad; they have a peculiar force in them, and greater

greater effect upon us. They are pro- Disc.II.  
per to awaken a secure mind, to en-  
gage a close attention, and raise suitable  
resentments and affections. We see this  
in fact and experience. And the reason  
of it is, that examples are *sensible* things,  
and easily understood. They lie upon a  
level with every ones apprehension, strike  
more strongly upon the senses, make a  
deeper impression upon the mind, and  
leave a more lasting effect behind them.

Rules and laws, precepts and prohi-  
bitions, with their sanctions of promises  
and threatnings, are rather objects of  
thought, and require a greater exercise of  
reason and consideration, to see the force,  
and feel the effect of them. They only  
assure and ascertain a future event, the  
rewards and punishments of obedience,  
and disobedience ; but examples are sen-  
sible things, which set the matter before  
our eyes : We see in such instances the  
truth of his word, and the law is exem-  
plified in a sensible fact. And all men can  
see, and feel, though they cannot reason  
and argue ; and are not easily brought to  
think and consider much. When I see  
a man wounded by an enemy, or die of  
a disease, it makes another impression  
upon my mind, than the mere relation  
of others, or the expectation of it at a  
distance. A living example of eminent  
goodness



Disc. II. goodness has a greater weight, and carries greater conviction to the mind, than mere doctrine and instruction, how excellent and perfect soever. So 'tis the peculiar advantage of the Christian dispensation, that we have a perfect *example* of universal holiness, as well as a perfect *rule*.

When we see a man executed for notorious crimes, and fall by the hands of publick justice, or by visible vengeance from heaven, it raises a greater horror of the crime, than the liveliest representation of words, and all the arguing in the world. Every *Israelite* who was stung with a serpent, or fell by the plague, like a criminal executed and hung in chains, is a publick warning to others, and creates a dread in the minds of the beholders.

You'll say this is true in instances before us, and which we ourselves have seen; but what is this to examples long ago? How are the *Israelites* in the wilderness our example? I answer, as we have good assurance of the truth of the fact, at so great a distance; so the *instruction* is always present, and remains with us, though the facts are over long ago; and they will always be of equal force, with the evidence of the facts: So far as we are satisfied of the truth of the one,

one, we have a just foundation and reason Disc. II.  
for the other.

2. We learn in these instances the *provoking* nature of sin, and how highly displeasing it is to GOD. Sin is represented as contrary to the holy nature of GOD, as well as to his law and will; and is the only thing which GOD is said to hate: *'Tis the abominable thing which his soul hateth.* The Psalmist says, *Thou art not* Psal. v. 4. *a GOD who hast pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee: thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.* 'Tis as opposite to him as the object of pleasure and hatred. *He is of purer eyes than to* Hab. i. *behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity;* <sup>13.</sup> that is, with approbation and liking, or without resentment, and dislike. The Apostle says here, *With many of them GOD was not well pleased;* that is, was greatly displeased: Their sin had highly provoked him. Every instance of their sin was a fresh provocation; and we see, in their case, how we ought to conceive of it; as the greatest evil in its own nature, and the object of divine aversion. It makes him angry with us, and brings down his displeasure upon us, as it makes us most unlike to him, and sets us in direct opposition to him. And do we provoke the <sup>1</sup> Cor. x. *Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than* <sup>22.</sup> *he?*

G

This

Disc. II. This is certainly proper to raise our dislike and abhorrence of it, and awaken our fear and dread. For should not we hate what God hates, and fear that which brings his displeasure upon us? Should not we *fear the great and terrible name of the Lord Jehovah; and fear him who can destroy body and soul in hell?* What can fix a dread of sin more effectually upon our minds, than the examples of divine displeasure against it, and the standing monuments of divine vengeance in the world? If our passions should not be arbitrary and unruly, but under the direction of wisdom and reason, and we should always love and hate what is truly good and evil; then we should certainly love the *chief good*, and hate the *greatest evil*. And that must needs be the greatest evil, which is most contrary to the chief good, and the proper object of our highest hatred. Besides,

3. We learn the necessary *connexion* between sin and punishment. There is a *natural* connexion founded in the reason of things, as well as by *positive* appointment, or ordination of the divine will; between moral evil, and natural evil, or between sin and punishment. Every such example is a sensible demonstration of this truth, that 'tis *an evil and bitter thing to sin against the Lord*. This is the natural consequence



consequence of the divine displeasure. If Disc.II.  
men wilfully offend God, they provoke  
his displeasure against their own souls. If  
they transgress his holy law, they expose  
themselves to the threatned curse; and  
it cannot be otherwise.

This is the true state of the case. And  
tho' this may be reasoned and argued out,  
by close attention and application of mind,  
which the generality of mankind are less  
capable of; yet we see it with greater  
ease, and in a stronger light, in a sensi-  
ble instance and example of it. This  
was the case here: *With many of them*  
*God was not well pleased*; and what was  
the consequence of it? why, *they were*  
*overthrown in the wilderness*. There was  
an entire destruction of that generation of  
men. The plague and fiery serpents with  
which they were afflicted, were an af-  
fecting proof of the punishment of sin,  
and that great offences will meet deserv-  
ed rebukes at the hand of a righteous  
God. And so 'tis in the case of others.  
Sin and punishment go hand in hand,  
and are naturally related to one another:  
This is the necessary consequence of it  
sooner or later, where repentance and  
pardon don't intervene and prevent it;  
as it did in the case of *Nineveh*. Every  
day of *temptation* is a day of *provocation*;  
and though the divine patience is some-

Disc. II. times long exercised, and judgment against an evil world is not speedily executed; yet, when the measure of a peoples iniquity is full, wrath will come upon them to the uttermost.

We see in the example of others punishment the proper desert of sin, and what is the natural tendency and consequence of it: And there is no breaking the connexion between them, but by *breaking off our sins* by repentance, and by the free favour and pardoning mercy of the great God. Again, we learn this further admonition

4. That *like* sins will have *like* punishments, in *like* circumstances. What is fact in the case of others, is desert in our own; and our case must be alike, in like circumstances with theirs; for they are *types* and examples to us, and, like a mirror or glass, where face answers to face, shew what our condition must be in a like case. We may learn this point of wisdom by others examples, and buy it at a cheaper rate than our own experience, in virtue of this observation, that like sins will have like punishments in the same circumstances: For the *reason* of the case is the same to them, and to us, and the measures of the divine government the same.

If

If therefore we are guilty of their sins, Disc.II. and with their aggravations, we must expect like judgments upon us for them. If we become *idolaters, fornicators, tempt* Christ by unbelief and presumption; and *murmur* against God, and divine dispensations toward us; we must expect to be overthrown, and destroyed too. When I see a man executed for *robbery* or murder, I have a sensible conviction of the just desert of such sins; and that whosoever commits the one, must expect the other; and that if I commit the same crimes, I must fall under the same exemplary vengeance; for I am under the same law, and subject to the same authority with him.

If we are unbelievers, and disobedient, after all the experience of the divine power and faithfulness, we shall fall under his heavy vengeance: If we tempt Christ, and provoke his anger, we shall *perish from the way*: If we continue impenitent in sin, we must *all likewise perish*, as all others have done before us. We have no pretence to plead exemption from the common rule, or to claim a privilege peculiar to ourselves, and different from other men; or that the great governor of the world should dispense with his wise constitution, and settled laws, in our favour,



Disc. II.

5. We learn that no *external privilege*, or enjoyment, will prevent the punishment of sin, or hinder the divine resentment against it. For this was the case in this example which is here set before us. The *Jews* were a chosen and favoured people above all the nations of the world; the posterity of *Abraham*, the *friend of God*; the children of the covenant and promise; delivered by a series of miracles in *Egypt*, and in the *wilderness*; they received the *lively oracles of God*, the revelations of his will, and appointments of worship; and were guided and watched over by a special providence, in all their wanderings, and in all their dangers. The Apostle represents their case in the beginning of this chapter: They were all *baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*; initiated into that dispensation; *and did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and all drink of the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, the water out of the rock, and that rock was Christ*. They were typical representations of the spiritual blessings of the Gospel.

Rom. ix.  
4.

There is a more particular account in the epistle to the *Romans*; *Who are Israelites*; the seed of *Jacob*, to whom *pertaineth the adoption*; they were brought into the relation of children, and belonged

ed to the church and family of GOD; Disc. II.  
*and the glory and the covenant, and the giving the law, and the service of GOD, and the promise*; the tokens of his favour and presence among them; *whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came*; which was their peculiar honour. So the Psalmist says, *He gave his statutes and judgments unto Israel, he hath not dealt so with any nation.* Psalm cxlvi. 19. And Amos iii. the prophet says, *You only have I known of<sup>2</sup> all the families of the earth.* This was their peculiar felicity and advantage; and yet we see, in their example, that all external privileges, and favours of providence toward them, was no protection from deserved punishment, or security in their sin: They were, notwithstanding, overthrown in the wilderness, and stung with serpents; fell by the plague, and were destroyed by the destroying angel.

We see, in this instance, what we must expect in a like case, notwithstanding our visible relation to GOD, and the special favours of his providence and grace, in the light of the gospel, and the worship of GOD, and the many remarkable appearances in our favour, from time to time. If GOD spared not his own people, but punished them with remarkable judgments for their great offence; he will not spare

Disc. II. spare us, if we offend in like manner.

~~~~~ If we tread in their steps, we must share their fate ; and *partake of their plagues*, if we *partake of their sins*. We may certainly conclude, from such instances as these, what will be our case in the same circumstances ; and that he will no more spare us, than he did them, notwithstanding our relation to God, or any peculiar privileges we enjoy. This is agreeable to the awful message to the church of *Thiatira* ; *I gave her space to repent of her fornications, and she repented not : Behold I will cast her into a bed, a punishment suitable to the crime, and them who committed fornication with her, into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and heart, and will give to every one of you according, not to your profession, but to your works.* In the last place,

Rev. ii.  
22.

6. We are admonished from hence, That the punishment of a professing and favoured people, will be more *severe* than that of other men. This example reaches to this case too. As the *Jews* were favoured with greater advantages than other nations, by the laws and worship of the true God, and the care and indulgence of



of a special providence toward them; Disc. II.  
their sin was proportionably greater than  
other nations who had only the light of  
nature, and the care of common provi-  
dence, and who generally lay in igno-  
rance and idolatry. And accordingly we  
find their punishment was answerably se-  
vere. This appeared by the many marks  
of divine displeasure against them; their  
overthrow in the wilderness, the fiery  
serpents, and the destroying angel. And  
afterward, when they revolted from the  
worship of the true God, and ran into  
the idolatry of their heathen neighbours;  
by their long captivities in a strange land,  
and by plague, and famine, and sword,  
which were brought upon them at diffe-  
rent times. And at last, when they had  
filled up the measure of their iniquity,  
by *crucifying the Lord of life*, and *reject-*  
*ing the counsel of God against themselves*;  
they were rejected of God; their whole  
state and polity destroyed. They are  
scattered through the whole earth, and  
hated and despised by all nations, and  
under the visible tokens of divine dis-  
pleasure: *His blood is upon them, and up-*  
*on their children*, to this day; and they  
are a standing monument of divine ven-  
geance before our eyes. And so it is ac-  
cording to that of the prophet; *You only*  
H have

The Signs of the Times

Disc. II. have I known of all the families of the  
earth, therefore will I punish you for your  
iniquities : Not therefore will I spare you,  
or indulge you in your sin, but therefore  
will I punish you for your iniquity.

Amos iii.  
2.

And so it must be with all other nations, for the same reason. A people who enjoy the light of the gospel, and the means of grace, will be more severely punished for their disobedience, and contempt of the divine mercy, as their sin is more aggravated than other mens. The seven churches of *Asia*, planted by the Apostles, for their looseness and lukewarmness, are long ago demolished, and overrun with *Mahometan* delusion. Many of the *Protestant* churches abroad are laid waste, and lie in ruins, for their formality and security. And what we have to apprehend upon this account, for the growing *infidelity*, *neglect* of divine appointments, and *corruption* of manners, God only knows ; and every serious Christian, who has a due regard to the welfare of his native country, has great reason to consider.

Heb. ii.  
2, 3.

The Apostle represents this case in a comparison between the *Jewish* and *Christian* church : For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence

compence of reward; how shall we escape Disc. II.  
if we neglect so great salvation, which at  
first began to be spoken by the Lord, and  
was confirmed to us by them who heard him?

And again, He who despised Moses's law, Heb. x.  
died without mercy, under two or three <sup>28.</sup>  
witnesses; of how much sorer punishment  
shall he be thought worthy, who hath trod  
under foot the Son of God?

They will certainly be the most *inex-  
cusable* of all men, and without any apo-  
logy at last, who go on in a way of sin,  
with such examples of punishment be-  
fore their eyes. It must argue great stu-  
pidity and hardness of heart, when we  
see, in such instances, the necessary con-  
sequences and issue of it. This is a like  
case with those hardened sinners who  
rob at the place of *execution*, and with  
an example of justice before them. God  
has given fair warning, in the most sen-  
sible manner, by others example: If we  
refuse to take the warning, and go on in  
sin notwithstanding, it must be at our  
highest peril. God will be justified in  
the greatest severity, and we shall be a-  
shamed and confounded.

I shall conclude with two *practical*  
*remarks* upon the two parts of this dis-  
course.



## Disc. II.



1. Let us *beware* of those sins which provoke the *displeasure* of GOD, and bring judgments upon us. In the words of the Apostle here, *Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.* And, *little children, keep yourselves from idols*: from every kind and every degree, from every appearance, and every tendency to it. *Flee fornication*, and every instance of sensual impurity, as unworthy the Christian profession, and not fit to be *named among Christians.* Let us *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.* Mortify your members which are upon the earth; *fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness*; for which things sake, the wrath of GOD cometh upon the children of disobedience.

1 Cor. x.  
14.  
1 John v.  
21.

1 Cor. vii  
1.  
Colos. iii.  
5.

Neither let us *tempt* Christ by unreasonable distrust of him, or unwarrantable expectations from him. Carefully avoid the extreme on either hand: Observe the due *medium* between them both; by faith in his word, and obedience to his will. Trust him in his own way, and upon a just ground: And here we may prove him to the utmost, with certain safety and success. Prove his faithfulness and power, his wisdom and goodness—and we shall always find him

him as good as his word, and able to Disc. II.  
*perform all things for us.* He is ever  
*mindful of his covenant, and his faithfulness never fails.* He will not deceive a  
regular trust, and our hope in him will  
*never make us ashamed.*

And let us not *murmur* against God,  
and the instruments of his providence,  
under any difficult appearance, or disagreeable  
circumstance; because we have not every thing we want, or, perhaps,  
have reason to think right. Don't cherish an uneasy, unthankful frame of spirit,  
under the many blessings we enjoy; or help to spread a dissatisfaction among  
others; which is set on foot with ill designs, and has a tendency only to do  
hurt. Discontent and complaint at the publick measures of government, and  
present dispensations of providence, when they come to prevail among the body of  
a people, lead directly to a general confusion, and expose us to the judgments  
of God; as the *murmuring* Israelites *were destroyed of the destroyer.* I speak  
the more freely upon this occasion, because some men speak of their *superiors*  
with such a freedom, as they themselves would have taken ill from the hands of  
an *equal.* I am persuaded people, sometimes, without any ill designs, or ill  
will,

Disc. II. will, through inadvertence and inconsideration, are doing mischief to the publick, and weakning the foundations upon which we all depend. Leave that to the enemies of the government, and the disaffected; they will be forward enough without our help.

Let us sacrifice all our *animosities* to the publick welfare, and unite our *zeal* in prayer to God this day, for the success of the necessary war in which we are engaged, and a blessing upon all our affairs; and in our constant endeavours, in our several stations, to promote the peace, and honour, and prosperity of the nation.

2. Let us consider the *examples* of others, to dissuade us from their sins. This is the reason of the instance in the text, and the use the Apostle makes of it. Consider the example of other sinners, who have fallen under deserved judgments, to keep up a just sense of the evil of their sins, and prevent the like judgments falling upon us. Consider the examples recorded in Scripture, as a standing warning to all after-generations of men. Remember *Lot's wife*, who was turned into a *pillar of salt*, to season the world against infidelity. Remember the *fire and brimstone* from the Lord out of Heaven,



Heaven, upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, for *Disc. II.* their unnatural lusts; who are *set forth* as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; and an example to them who should live ungodly. Remember the deluge of the old world, when all flesh had corrupted its way, and the earth was filled with violence; God brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, and cleansed the polluted earth from overflowing impieties: Remember the *Israelites*, who were exercised with various judgments, and all perished in the wilderness, for their unbelief and disobedience. Remember the *Christian Corinthians*, who many of them were sick and weak, and some of them fell asleep; that is, were visited with sickness and death, for their profanation and abuse of the *Lord's-Supper*; which should teach us reverence in our attendance upon it, and a sacred regard to the institution.

I might add the example of the ancient *Roman State*, which flourished and prospered in so extraordinary a manner, for several ages, while they continued regular and vertuous; but when they grew degenerate and corrupt, and became *factions* and *venal*, they languished and declined, and sunk into contempt and ruin, and were destroyed, at last, by the nations they had conquered.

If

Disc. II. If there are any examples which have fallen under your own notice and observation, of a more publick or private nature, of remarkable punishments, and rebukes for sin; if any have come to an untimely end, by notorious wickedness; or shortened their days by intemperance and excess; or made them miserable by the natural effects of their sin, or the just rebukes of providence, by diseases of body, or distresses of life; beware of their sin; take the warning of their example, that you may never fall under their punishment.

This is the wise use to be made of other mens *miscarriages*; and great advantage may be gained by it to ourselves. We see the rocks upon which others have split, that we may steer a different course; and are warned of the danger before-hand, by the affecting example of others ruin. If we, blind and wilful, run into the same snares, we must expect the same disasters, and meet the same fate. And how reproachful and unpitied will be our fall, if we perish by our own hands, and by obstinate continuing in sin, against all the methods of mercy, and of judgment; the examples of others misery, and the warnings of our own danger?

But

But it must be by carefully *weighing* Disc.II.  
the matter, and considering the nature  
and consequences of things, and com-  
paring the circumstances of our case, and  
the aspect of present affairs. 'Tis by deep  
and serious thoughts, that we must affect  
our hearts, and find the power and in-  
fluence of them; when cold and tran-  
sient thoughts, like the traces of a ship  
upon the surface of the water, presently  
wear off, and leave no lasting impression  
behind them. Whatever present affec-  
tions they may raise, they will never en-  
ter into the heart, or have any abiding  
effect. They will be considered only as  
pieces of ancient *history*, or a relation of  
*unconcerning* facts, and not as representations  
of our own case, or standing examples to  
the world.

GOD grant that we may be wise, and  
*consider the latter end*, and *know*, in  
*this our day*, the things which *belong*  
*to our common peace*, before they are  
*hid from our eyes*.

F I N I S.



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